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## EDITORIAL.

THE NOMENCLATURE QUESTION was opened in the recent meeting of the Botanical Club by the submission, on the part of the committee, of its report in the form of the printed "List of Pteridophyta, etc." Two diverse positions had developed previous to the meeting. Some advocates of reform declared that the list, being simply the expression of principles already adopted, was already the official utterance of the club regarding the plants included; while others held that the list was prepared for the purpose of furnishing a basis for discussion of the principles exemplified in it. The latter has been the position assumed by the GAZETTE.

The action of the club, in effect endorsing this position by receiving the report and continuing the committee with two additional members, appears to us therefore eminently wise. The duty of the committee during the coming year seems plain. Having in view (1) the objections to the Rochester and Madison principles which have been and may be made in this country and Europe, (2) the suggestions which have been made in other countries as to desirable amendments to the Paris code, and (3) the difficulties which have developed in specific application of existing principles, it is to be hoped that the committee will frame a complete code, based upon the DeCandollean, which may be perfected as far as possible and presented to the first international congress convened for that purpose, as the concrete expression of the views of American botanists.

THERE IS EVIDENTLY a good deal of misunderstanding regarding the status of the Rochester and Madison rules. They have been spoken of frequently as "the American code" and have been regarded as the settled and formal expression of the Botanical Club. It has also been assumed that they are to be forced upon the world by a handful of obscure botanists without reference to the action of other countries or of an international congress. Many of the signers of the "Harvard protest" and some of the radical reformers have held one or the other of these misconceptions. But the "American code" is yet to be formulated; its authority, which can rest only in the acquiescence of American botanists, is yet to be obtained; and its weight in the international congress to which it must be submitted is yet to be determined. The Rochester and Madison rules in the main commend themselves to the sober judgment, and we look hopefully for the complete code which the committee should prepare for our consideration.

THE MOST CONSERVATIVE botanists acknowledge that something of this sort ought to be done—nay, *must* be done in view of existing conditions. The real difference of opinion seems to be as to the advisability of using such a code as a guide in publication before it has been sanctioned by an international congress, and this question ought to be kept distinct from the approval of the reform principles themselves. In view of the history of nomenclatorial reforms, we feel justified in advocating such use; but there may well be difference of opinion here. Let it be so; but let us, in spite of this difference, unite in perfecting an American code in readiness for the congress, which must come sooner or later. Send to the committee all the objections and suggestions possible. Their all too thankless task has not been light, and conservative and radical alike should be grateful to them for the gratuitous service they have already rendered, and will, we trust, yet render.

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THE FIRST MEETING of the Botanical Society of America must be looked upon as very successful. The membership is still small, and from the close scrutiny to which candidates are subjected will only increase slowly. Considering the limited membership, the attendance at Springfield (70 per cent.) was large. The following were present: Arthur, Atkinson, Bailey, Barnes, Britton (N. L.), Britton (Mrs. N. L.), Coville, Greene, Halsted, Hollick, Robinson, Sargent, Scribner, Thaxter and Trelease. The papers were of value and interest.

AN EXODUS from “the land of ‘poco tiempo’” should be organized by our conservative friends. “The future,” for which the law of homonyms is declared to be good, is like the small boy’s promised “to-morrow”—difficult to define.

THE NOMENCLATURE QUESTION has received altogether admirable treatment in an article by Prof. Lester F. Ward in the July number of the *Bulletin* of the Torrey Botanical Club. No personal detraction diminishes its force.

ABSOLUTE UNANIMITY of opinion and action is demanded among the reformers. We fail to find such unanimity even among the advocates of a *laissez faire* policy, where it is much more to be expected.